

# Make your food go further

By Jen Trew

Each year, the typical American family tosses out \$2,275 worth of food and beverages. About 15 to 20 percent of the produce we buy is wasted. But as we all know, eating a diet full of fruits and veggies is good for your health and longevity.



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A few simple tasks can help each of us eat healthier and reduce food waste:

- Before food shopping, take inventory of what you have on hand. Make a plan for using up fresh items in your kitchen before they go bad.
- Buy only what you need. Make a list of how produce will be served once purchased.
- Store produce properly. If it's refrigerated at the store, it should be at home as well.
- Some plants emit a gas that speeds up ripening in other plants. These include avocados, bananas, mangos, peaches, apples, melons, and tomatoes. Don't keep these in the same bin with other fruits and veggies.
- Some produce has a shorter life span than others, such as mushrooms, tender greens, berries, herbs, and summer squash. Use these first.

- If your produce is nearing its end, lay it out on a sheet pan and freeze for later use.

Repurposing leftovers is a great way to minimize food waste.

Try these tips:

- Have a leftover night for dinner toward the end of the week.
- Everyone gets a small portion of each item.
- Roasted veggies and leftover grilled chicken are great for topping a baked potato or rice as an easy meal.
- An egg scramble or salad made with leftover veggies is another tasty way to use up what you have.

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